

## Editorial

## Int J LCA – Associated Journal of the UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative

Jacqueline Aloisi de Lardere<sup>1</sup> and James Fava<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> Assistant Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme • Director, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, 39-43 Quai André Citroën, F-75739 Paris Cedex 15, France ([unep.tie@unep.fr](mailto:unep.tie@unep.fr); [www.unep.tie.org](http://www.unep.tie.org))<sup>2</sup> SETAC representative, UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative • Managing Director, Five Winds International, 626 Meadow Drive, West Chester, PA 19380, USA ([j.fava@fivewinds.com](mailto:j.fava@fivewinds.com))Dear Readers of *The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment*,

We are pleased to announce that the International Life Cycle Panel, the board of the UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative, has decided to establish an official collaboration with Int J LCA. We would like to thank the journal for this offer to work together to further our joint objectives of promoting the use of life cycle thinking and life cycle assessment. We hope that this collaboration contributes to the highly appreciable efforts to globalise the use of life cycle tools undertaken by the journal as the official organ of the LCA Society of Japan, the Indian Society for LCA, the Korean Society for LCA, and the Australian LCA Society.

As part of this collaboration, you will regularly be informed about the recent developments and activities of the Life Cycle Initiative, a partnership between industry, academia, government, NGOs, and international organisations. Also, active members of the initiative from developing countries will be able to obtain the journal to a reduced fee.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) launched the Life Cycle Initiative in Prague, Czech Republic, on April 28, 2002 during UNEP's 7th High-level Seminar on Cleaner Production, and in presence of SETAC's President Lorraine Maltby and UNEP's Executive Director Klaus Töpfer who said "We made a big step forward in the implementation of the agenda of sustainable consumption and production policies", and emphasised that "It is 'environment for development' that binds us together; life cycle thinking – leading to transparent, practical and accessible information for everyone – is a vital concept in this respect."

The Life Cycle Initiative is a response to the call from the governments for a life cycle economy in the Malmö Declaration (2000) adopted at the 1st Global Ministerial Environment Forum. It contributes to the 10-year framework of programmes to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, as requested by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg (2002), which states: "We must develop production and consumption policies to improve the products and services provided, while reducing environmental and health impacts, using, where appropriate, science based approaches, such as life cycle analysis."

Since the launch of the Life Cycle Initiative, the life cycle approach has moved even further into the centre of international attention. This is confirmed by the UNEP Governing Council decision from 5 February 2003 in which UNEP was asked "to strengthen existing eco-efficiency, cleaner production and sustainable consumption programmes, such as its partnership with Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC), including facilitating the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, especially to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and activities to stimulate the design of sustainable products and services."

Developing a life cycle economy is the only way to respond to the challenge of sustainable development: provide decent living conditions for all within the Earth's carrying capacity. New tools and strategies such as life cycle assessment, eco-labelling, and sustainable product and service design, should therefore not create new

trade barriers that hinder the economic development of developing countries. On the contrary, these tools and strategies should and can contribute to growth and human development if the knowledge and skills required were widely spread which is informatively not the case.

As stated in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. "All countries should promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, with the developed countries taking the lead and with all countries benefiting from the process (...) Develop awareness-raising programmes on the importance of sustainable production and consumption patterns, particularly among youth and the relevant segments in all countries, especially in developed countries".

This is why the Life Cycle Initiative intends to develop regional capacity building and training programmes in Africa, Asia/ Pacific, Eastern Europe, and Latin America to further promote the use of life cycle thinking around the world as well as the exchange of information and experiences.

The regional programmes will start in June 2003 in two regions: Asia/ Pacific and Africa. The kick-off meeting for the Asia/ Pacific region will take place in Bali, Indonesia, to coincide with the annual International Standards Organisation (ISO) meeting. Its aim is to prepare a foundation for an Asia/ Pacific capacity building network. The Japanese government, through its National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST), is an active partner in the Life Cycle Initiative and will organise the event. Furthermore, representatives of the Indian, Korean and Australian LCA Societies will be invited. In June, the Industrial Ecology Institute will host a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, co-sponsored by UNEP, that aims at "Harnessing the Life Cycle Approach in Sustainable Production and Consumption in Eastern and Southern Africa". Eastern-European and Latin-American programmes are being planned as well. Collaborations are under preparation with the European Commission and the Brazilian Life Cycle Association.

Finally, we would like to emphasise that the launch of the Life Cycle Initiative would not have been possible without the contribution of resources and the expertise by UNEP's and SETAC's key partners including AIST, the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE), the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), General Motors, and the Governments of the Netherlands, Switzerland and Quebec.

The Life Cycle Initiative has been established with an International Life Cycle Panel associating the various partners as the governing body. Around 200 experts have been volunteered to participate in the initiative's working groups on Life Cycle Management, Life Cycle Inventory and Life Cycle Impact Assessment, and more than 500 have subscribed to the mailing list. We realize that we cannot accomplish our goals alone; we must work in partnership and collaboration with other organizations (such as the Society of Industrial Ecology). Your active participation is key to the continued success of the Life Cycle Initiative! Please see the initiative's website <http://www.unep.tie.org/pc/sustain/lcinitiative/> for additional information on how to become involved.